

at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee. Two major events highlighted those college years. One was the once-in-a-lifetime experience of winning the national Tournament of Orators sponsored annually by the Hearst Newspaper chain. She was the only woman to ever win the national finals of that contest. The 1950 finals were held in Baltimore and Bishop Sheen was one of the judges. To that day, Agnes cherishes her kiss on the cheek from Sheen, at least as much as the cash prize that accompanied her first-place finish.

This other event, meeting her future husband, occurred while Agnes was working her way through college at the Milwaukee Public Library. John Lynch came into the library one night to check out a book. He was on his way home from the German bakery, just down the street from the library, where he was working his way through Marquette University. John and Agnes were married in Milwaukee just after graduation and moved to Gary, John's hometown.

After their third child was born, Agnes started her teaching career, first at Toleston High School and then, for 25 years, at Merrillville High School, where she was the English Department chairwoman, sponsor of the Thespian Society and director of the class plays. There are few people in northwest Indiana who didn't have Agnes for a teacher. In her spare time, she earned her M.A. from Valparaiso University. After retiring from Merrillville High School, Agnes taught for 3 years at Indiana University Northwest.

A widow since John's passing in 2000, Agnes now devotes her time to church, traveling and basking in the accomplishments of her children. Mr. Speaker, Agnes Lynch has given her time and efforts selflessly to the people of northwest Indiana throughout her long and illustrious life. She has given the gift of knowledge to thousands in our community. I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in congratulating Ms. Lynch for her outstanding contributions to Indiana's First Congressional District. I am proud to commend Agnes for her lifetime of service and dedication.

#### HONORING MR. VAL ROSE

#### HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 29, 2004*

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to pay tribute to an outstanding man, Mr. Val Rose, who on December 4, 2003 retired from the Genesee County Sheriff Department in Flint, Michigan after 20 years of dedicated service to the residents of Genesee County. On May 4, 2004, family and friends will gather to honor the career of Mr. Rose during a dinner to be held at the Ramada Inn located in my hometown of Flint, Michigan.

Val was born in Flint, Michigan on October 20, 1951 to Dr. and Mrs. Frank (Florence) Rose. He graduated from Central High School in 1970. He attended Flint Junior College (Mott College) and majored in criminal justice. During his course of study he received an internship within the Flint Police Department. His first official assignment was with a police force in the State of Wyoming. Upon returning to the Great State of Michigan, Val sought po-

sitions that would allow him to continue in his commitment to defending human dignity. He served as one of the officers on the first internal Hurley Medical Center security team. Val began his tenure with the Genesee County Sheriff Department as a Deputy Sheriff in September of 1993. During his career Val was elected Steward and later Chief Steward of AFSCME Local 2259, a position he held until his retirement. He was also the coordinator of the special events within the Sheriff Department. Val chaired the Michigan Special Olympics "Law Enforcement Torch Run" for 3 years. He assisted with communications for the Special Olympics "Crim Races" for 14 years, and he rode his bicycle twice across Michigan in memory of fallen deputies and other law enforcement agents. He was an adviser/instructor for 10 years with the Forgotten Man Mission Training Program, which was established to assist individuals with becoming an assistant chaplain. Val's invaluable service to the community has not gone unnoticed. During his career he received numerous accolades, including the Sheriff's "Community Service" award for his commitment to volunteering and promoting safety. Aside from his law enforcement career, Val is the Commander of the Flint-Flotilla U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and most recently he became a member of the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary, Lt. Col. Keehn Composite Flint Squadron.

Val is not only dedicated to serving and protecting the community, he is also and foremost a devoted husband to his lovely and supportive wife of 26 years, Louise.

Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Congress, I ask my colleagues in the 108th Congress to please join me in honoring my good friend and constituent Val Rose, and wishing him the very best in his retirement.

#### HOMELESS VETERANS ASSISTANCE REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2004

#### HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 29, 2004*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that there are 200,000 or more homeless veterans living on the streets on any given night. Other organizations dedicated to assisting homeless populations believe that that number is higher, closer to 300,000. Either number is far too high and a national travesty. For these veterans, access to VA benefits, specialized services and effective outreach are vital components to any hope of individual stability and improvement in their prospects.

With the passage of Public Law 107-95, the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001, Congress established the goal of ending chronic homelessness in the veteran population within a decade. Today, I am introducing H.R. 4248 along with Mr. EVANS of Illinois, the Committee's ranking member, that would extend the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to continue making grants to expand or modify existing programs for homeless veterans. The current authority for this program will expire in September 2005 without this legislation. VA also requested an increase in the grant and per

diem program spending limit from \$75 million to \$100 million, in its fiscal year 2005 medical care budget proposal. This legislation would authorize that spending increase along with extending the program authority through 2008.

The VA's Homeless Grant and Per Diem program provides competitive grants to community-based, faith-based, and public organizations to offer transitional housing or service centers for homeless veterans. Between grants and per diem-only awards, VA is contributing support for approximately 10,000 community-based supportive housing beds and services to homeless veterans in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Current recipients of these funds are contributing in very significant ways to the fulfillment of the objective to reduce homelessness among veterans.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the homeless veterans who need these services and the programs that are achieving successful outcomes, I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

#### HONORING CALIFORNIA STATE SENATOR JOHN VASCONCELLOS

#### HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 29, 2004*

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the members representing Silicon Valley, including Representatives STARK, LANTOS, LOFGREN, HONDA and FARR, I rise to honor California State Senator John Vasconcellos, one of the most highly respected legislators in California, who is retiring this year after representing Santa Clara County in the California Legislature for nearly forty years. Senator Vasconcellos will be honored on Friday, April 30, 2004 by the Santa Clara County Democratic Party for his extraordinary public service career.

John Vasconcellos is a graduate of Bellarmine College Preparatory in San Jose and the University of Santa Clara, where he was the first person in the history of the institution to graduate as Student Body President, Valedictorian and recipient of a medal given to the outstanding member of the senior class. After two years in the Army, he returned to attend Santa Clara University Law School where he again was Class President and a top student. He practiced law in San Jose and served in the Administration of Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown.

John Vasconcellos was first elected to the California State Assembly in 1966, where he served for 30 years before being elected to the State Senate. During his tenure in the Assembly, he served as the Chairman of the powerful Assembly Ways and Means Committee where he earned a reputation as a masterful negotiator and conciliator, and for the superior legislation he produced.

In 1996, John Vasconcellos was elected to the California State Senate, where he has served on the Budget, Public Safety, and Energy, Utilities and Communications Committees and as the Chair of the Committees on Education, Economic Development, Preparing California for the 21st Century, and the Internet Caucus. He founded the California Task Force to Promote Self Esteem and Personal